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463 the great majority still are today. For them the family has always been the basic unit of production. As much as five months of the 592 year are spent non-productively (Ranga, 1934, 9–10), but during the other months every member of the family, even a child, makes some contribution to the traditional family economy. Adults work in the fields and are helped by boys and girls when necessary (462) (Harkness, 1832, 114–115). Men do the heavier work, such as forking, ploughing or clearing stones, and women the lighter work, mainly planting, weeding and harvesting (Ward, 1821, lxx, lxxiii; Jagor, 1876, 201–202: Ranga, 1934, 8; Noble, 1968, 143–148). As well as their field-work women are responsible for cooking and for (883) all the housekeeping, including the laundry.[25] Adolescent boys work as cowherds; girls take care of babies whose mothers are in (857) the fields (Harkness, 1832, 113). Children also do the initial preparation of meals before the women return home each day. • (887) People too old to work in the fields stay at home minding the children and keeping an eye on what passes within the village (Jagor, 1876, 194).

463 This pattern has been modified somewhat by a trend among the more educated men to work away from the village. At first a few (178) were employed in the towns as peons, clerks, builders and labourers, and throughout the district as primary school teachers.[26] During the First World War some young men began (464) working in the munitions factory near Wellington (it still employs (871) many Badagas). Then, in the 1920s, the first Badagas attended university and returned to professional positions in the Nilgiris. Of these professionals the most influential small group have been the parliamentarians—M.P.s and M.L.A.s—many of whom are from one extended family whose fortune was initially established by labour contraction (see Diagram 9, p. 179). More numerous today are the doctors and lawyers. Other Badagas who though less well-educated no longer follow their traditional occupation include school-teachers, government officials, bus drivers, contractors and factory workers.

476 A correlate of this move towards the towns has been the breakdown of customary labouring methods. There were two kinds (478) of cooperative labour: in one a number of families (usually from one lineage) would pool their labour to farm an area and then would divide up the produce proportionately; in the other, several families would work for a particular farmer but have no share in his produce: he in turn would help them with their cultivation. For

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[864] [804] spiritual guide, does not give his nephews or nieces any of this information either. Girls may exceptionally be able to get advice from their mothers or grandmothers.

Girls do have sexual discussions however, mainly with other girls of the same age, and especially with adolescent girls who have recently married or who are about to be married. A group of adolescent friends is thus where a young bride will find out about the sexual experiences of others. In general young girls are not included in such discussions before they reach puberty, as it is felt they would not understand.

There is a situation in which the instruction of girls used to be more formalized, and at the same time allowed for an older, experienced woman to teach them. Until the early part of this century [882] unmarried adolescent girls used to sleep together in one house of their village. Since the young boys did the same thing in another house, this allowed married adults more freedom to engage in sexual activity at home. Naturally the girls sometimes had sexual discussions and the woman, often a widow, in whose house they were staying would usually join in with some practical advice.

[178] [882] The custom of boys sleeping together in one house has virtually ceased, but it did offer them too an opportunity for sexual discussions. Boys show an interest in sex at an earlier age than girls do, and from the age of 12 they take part in discussions with youths much older than themselves, including some who are married. Thus some boys may joke with a newly-wed friend about what they have heard him doing at night, and he in turn may choose to give them a detailed description.

Boys who are not attending school have a great deal of time to spend on sexual discussions and experimentation. Usually too there [880] are some idle old men in the village who kill time by talking about sex with the boys or discuss the subject amongst themselves. Young husbands and wives may also have such discussions, just as unmarried lovers do. Groups of women may be quite frank about their experiences in front of each other, too. Newly married brides can hope to learn something from their perhaps more experienced husbands, and adolescent boys sometimes manage to learn from the wife of an elder brother.

3.3. Conversation inevitably leads to observation, and in a peasant society opportunities abound for watching sexual activity. Most visible, of course, are the dogs and cattle in the village, whose be-

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833 course simply to please their parents; or so that the husband will not be suspected of impotence by his watchful relatives; or so that his parents may not accuse the girl of being barren; or, when one of them does want intercourse, the other does it merely to oblige. Pub-
[208] lic opinion is an important factor in sexual relations, and it must if possible be satisfied by a pregnancy. If a couple have no children
842 a divorce may be forced upon them after a while, even if neither
586 of them wants that. When a couple have no children outsiders start
208 asking their parents, "What is the matter with them?" Interestingly, loose talk of this sort will be directed towards the childless husband before people — primarily his parents — begin to attach any blame to the girl.

833 Older couples who have several children continue to engage in
887 coitus either for pleasure or out of habit, I was told. Men may con-
886 tinue into old age, perhaps performing the act no more than once a month; but women tend to lose interest once menopause has set in, and are often not in the best of health by that time. A small mino-
587 rity of widowers decide they have the strength to remarry and provided they are wealthy enough to support another wife may intimate this interest to a male friend of equal age. He will tell the old man's sons and daughters about the idea, and these children will then look around for a new stepmother. This however will only occur after they have tested the old man's capabilities. One test is to have some-
[514] one observe him when he urinates: it must be noted whether the flow
[827] of urine was strong enough to make a slight hole in the mud, which would be taken as an indication of suitable strength. A further test
587 might involve the wife of his younger brother. She would be deputed
835 to catch him somewhere privately where she might suggest particular women for him, or even go so far as to assay his capabilities herself. Such an affair would be impermissible if the old man were related as a "husband's father" to her — albeit a classificatory one. But otherwise, provided the affair were handled with discretion, it would be quite acceptable for her to have relations with a husband's brother. Furthermore "it is quite common for a widow to marry her
587 brother-in-law" ("Miles" 1933: 74). In the past a wealthy old widower
833 might ask a younger man to find him a wife. If successful in this he would probably locate a young but barren woman, who might well complain right away that such an old man could not satisfy her. This dilemma was sometimes overcome when the go-between undertook to satisfy the woman provided she married his older friend.

*Early Childhood*

5.15. At about the fifth month of life the child, surrounded by blankets or other protective matter, is made to sit up. In the sixth or seventh month he will start to crawl, and once he does this he will be allowed to sleep on the floor, but not on a cot or shelf from which he might fall. The relatives encourage a child to crawl, then to stand and walk, by placing little articles as bribes in front of it. A Badaga proverb says, "See the power of the baby's legs when it crawls; see the state of the young plant." This means that the child's future life is reflected in the way it crawls; and similarly, "Judge the little children by watching the good movement of their legs while dancing." If instead of crawling a baby stretches its legs forward while sitting, and then inches its bottom forward, it is said to be a lazy child. Conversely the one who crawls on hands and knees will be walking very soon.

5.16. Children begin talking at 12 to 18 months. The parents at first use a few onomatopoeic words with them, as well as special words for children like the "baby talk" of English. Thus there are words for commonplace matters like sleep, bathe, etc., and a meal (*hittu*) for example is called *ku* for babies; *ku* is in fact ceremonial food mixed with milk.

5.17. It is the prime duty of old people in the home to educate and care for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, particularly because the parents are often working outside somewhere. If younger people spend too much of their working hours playing with the baby someone will make the snide remark that "The thief of work has the child as a pretext." Even though children now attend school it is still the elders who teach them to talk, and then explain to them much about Badaga life. To do this they tell the children both traditional tales and stories they make up for moral instruction. In this context children often hear the Badaga proverbs, which encapsulate so much of the customary morality. Many of the folktales the children are told and then made to repeat are animal stories with some clear ethical content. Now that children go to school it is most usually after supper when they urge the elders to tell them stories. Children over five are not interested in the animal fables, and so they are told somewhat more realistic stories about Kurumba sorcerers, or about tigers and jackals that take children away at night. Such stories are told to make the children afraid of these

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things. Love stories are not told to children under 13. The adults themselves are not really interested in stories, only in folksongs. Adults also sing to their children, and encourage them to learn special children's songs from an early age; but they do also pick up adult folksongs simply by listening to them.

5.18. Child upbringing does not appear to be particularly repressive. The relative freedom that smaller children enjoy is summed up in a proverb: "Children [left out on] the right-of-way will grow; children [kept in] the room get rotten." Children are disciplined by a variety of threats. They are told they will be given away, if bad, to a Golla mendicant or a Kurumba tribesman. The coming of a ghost, demon, or a vaccinator is another common threat; or they may be told a tiger or a pig will take them away. Otherwise people compare a bad child unfavourably with the behaviour of his childhood friend. These threats and comparisons have little effect on older children. From the age of five or six children are jokingly told about a certain cross-cousin who will come to marry them "next year." This threat or promise is also used to enjoin proper behaviour: "If your wife saw you, she'd abuse you" (or conversely, "she'd marry you at once"). When there seems to be a choice among several cousins the parents may ask a child which he prefers, or threaten to bring a bad one to him if he misbehaves. The same treatment is used to discipline girls, with the additional possibility of telling a small girl she will be given away in marriage to a beggar, a Kota or a Kurumba, instead of to a Badaga husband. Adolescent children may not be disciplined so gently, and some of them are not unfamiliar with a rope's end.

Kindness and outright bribery are also lavished on children, as evidenced in the saying: "It is like influencing children by giving them crude sugar."

5.19. Between the ages of five and seven children go through a transition marked by some major changes in their daily habits. In the old days some girls would become child-brides after reaching the age of five. Nowadays the transition means spending much of the week in school instead of at home. There are other changes too. The children begin to eat from their own plates. Girls stop sleeping with their fathers, though they may continue to sleep with their mothers or with other children. Boys are now embarrassed to sleep with their mothers or sisters. If there are several boys or several girls of similar age on one street they now band together

## Employment

463 Prior to 1913 all Badagas were primarily agriculturists; for the great ma-
592 jority of the people this is still true today. Although as much as five months of the farming year is spent non-productively (Ranga 1934: 9-10), every member of the family, even the child, makes some contribution to the traditional family economy.
241 Adults work in the fields, and are helped by boys and girls when necessary (Hark-
462 ness 1832: 114-15). Men do the heavier work, such as forking or plowing, and women do the lighter work, mainly planting, weeding and harvesting (Ward 1821: lxx, lxxiii; Ranga 1934: 8). Adolescents work as cowherds, and girls also take
241 883 care of small babies while the mothers are out in the fields (Harkness 1832: 113).
857 Children also do the preliminary work of cooking before the women return home
462 each day. As well as field-work, women do the main part of the cooking and are responsible for all of the house-keeping, including the laundry (Jagor 1876: 201-02).
887 People too old to work in the fields stay at home minding the children and keeping an eye on what passes within the village during the day-time (Jagor 1876: 194).

178 This pattern has been modified somewhat by the trend among the more
463 educated Badagas to work away from the village. At first a few Badagas were being employed in the towns as peons, clerks, builders and laborers, and throughout the District as teachers (Thurston 1909: I, 63; Ranga 1934: 8; Vivekanandam Pillai 1937: 248). During the First World War some young men worked in a muni-
(871) tions factory at Wellington. Then, in the 1920's, the first Badagas attended col-
(550) leges and returned to professional positions in the Nilgiris. Of these professionals the most influential small group have been the parliamentarians, M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s, nearly all of them coming from one family. More numerous are the doctors and lawyers. Other less well-educated Badagas who no longer follow their tradi-